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ABSTRACT

A study examined whether sustained silent reading produced positive attitudes toward reading. Subjects, 583 intermediate grade students and 26 teachers in the 5 elementary schools in the Pulaski, Wisconsin School District, were questioned about reading on a broad basis and about their attitudes toward Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) in particular. Results indicated that: (1) only a slight majority of students were not allowed to select materials they wanted to read; (2) the time of day the SSR was held had no bearing on student behavior; (3) no relationship was found between the students' desire to have SSR and their present attitude toward SSR; (4) no difference was found in the effectiveness of daily versus non-daily SSR programs; (5) many teachers did not model recreational reading effectively; (6) students' interest in reading was aroused, but only during SSR; and (7) there was a progressive diminishing of interest in reading in the higher grade levels while positive attitudes by gender also diminished. Recommendations include the adoption of an SSR program in the school district since the program had shown some positive effects. (Eighteen tables of data are included; 35 references and the survey instruments are attached.) (RS)

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE SUSTAINED SILENT READING (SSR) PROGRAM FOR INTERMEDIATE GRADE STUDENTS IN THE PULASKI, WISCONSIN SCHOOL DISTRICT

By Jeanne (Mull) Wiscont

This study investigated the current Sustained Silent Reading Program (SSR) in the Pulaski, Wisconsin School District. Questions addressed student and teacher attitudes in relationship to the SSR program.

An overwhelming majority of the students want to continue the SSR program. Factors examined included time of day, materials selection, and effectiveness of the SSR program.

This study concluded that the SSR program has some positive effects on students.

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A STUDY OF THE SUSTAINED SILENT READING (SSR) PROGRAM FOR INTERMEDIATE GRADE STUDENTS IN THE PULASKI, WISCONSIN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Sustained silent reading (SSR) is an easily implemented procedure that has been successfully used in both elementary and secondary schools. Lyman Hunt is credited with introducing this method in 1970, calling it "uninterrupted sustained silent reading (USSR)" (Mazur-Stewart, 1986). McCracken dropped the word "uninterrupted" from the name thus decreasing the attention received by the acronym (Mazur-Stewart, 1986).

The concept of SSR was not a completely new idea, for prior to 1970 it was simply referred to as free reading (Sadowski, 1980) or silent library book reading (Mohr, 1972). SSR entails each student selecting a book and silently reading it for a specified time during which no interruptions take place, and where the teacher serves as a role model by silently reading (McCracken & McCracken, 1978). Students are not required to keep records or reports about their reading, and the teacher does not test students on the content because the emphasis is on reading for pleasure.

In spite of the widespread availability of media materials within the school as well as the benefits of televised programs, reading remains the major avenue of

learning, for it is the standard means of introducing new information, in developing concepts of understanding, or providing review of ideas and of stimulating thought, whether through the use of books, magazines, or newspapers. The SSR program is based upon three premises. First, students select books or other materials that they want to read; secondly, students learn to read by reading; and finally, the program helps students acquire reading proficiency.

The teaching of reading is an important part of education, and it has attracted attention, not only from educators and psychologists, but also from the general public. One of the current approaches that seems to have met with some success is the SSR program that is being used in the Pulaski, Wisconsin School District.

The main justification for the Pulaski School District SSR program approach is the need to provide for individual differences among students. If the rationale for individual reading is to meet the needs and abilities of students, any program must be flexible. Principles that are basic in one form or another to most sustained silent reading programs are: (1) the materials used are "self-selected" by students, and (2) students read at their own individual rate.

It is the policy of the Pulaski, Wisconsin School District that the teachers who employ an SSR program make certain that it is properly introduced. This requires the cooperation of the school administrators because they are

responsible to the parents for the competent instruction of students. In addition, before the individual reading program is initiated, the concept must be adequately explained to and understood by parents and by students who are to be involved.

Each student needs to comprehend exactly what the responsibilities and privileges are. Because an adequate amount of reading material may be available both in the classroom and media center, it is desirable that students be given some familiarity with the contents of the classroom library and media center. Here the teacher can take advantage of the expertise and services of the media specialist, who can offer needed instruction in book selection and skillfully execute requests of individual students for outside reading materials that will be obtained through interlibrary loans.

The groundwork at Pulaski was laid for an SSR program in 1976. The faculty at Hillcrest Elementary School learned from schools outside the district that SSR was a worthwhile program. With that understanding, the faculty submitted a proposal to the administration that an SSR program be implemented by reducing each class period two minutes to come up with sufficient time to have SSR. The result was that an SSR program was established at one school. When faculty members were transferred, the domino effect caused an SSR program to be initiated at each school throughout the district.

Statement of the Problem

The following concerns were addressed in studying the SSR program: materials selection, time of day, attitude and effectiveness of the program. This study also attempted to examine student and teacher attitudes toward reading and SSR.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine whether sustained silent reading produces positive attitudes toward reading. If sustained silent reading is found to produce neutral or negative attitudes, evaluation of the amount of class time spent on the SSR program is warranted.

The reading attitude surveys used in this study measured how students and teachers felt toward reading in a broad sense rather than any specific reading component. Kennedy and Halinski (1975) state that students' attitudes toward reading are always important in learning. When teachers learn more about students attitudes there is a possibility of establishing more effective reading programs. The surveys may open the door to an examination of a total school reading program, both free and required reading, by providing insights into students' attitudes that affect the development of lifetime reading interests.

Definition of Terms

The following are definitions of terms used in this study:

Sustained Silent Reading. A structured activity in which students are allocated a fixed period of time for the silent reading of self-selected materials (Moore, Jones, and Miller, 1980).

Attitude. The tendency to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to specific questions about reading (Summers and McClelland, 1982).

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were used in this study:

1. Self-selection of materials by students will enhance enjoyment of reading.

2. There is a relationship between time of day that SSR is done and student behavior.

3. There is a relationship between time of day when students want to have SSR and their attitudes toward SSR.

4. The SSR program on a daily basis is more effective than on a non-daily basis.

5. Teacher role modeling affects SSR.

6. An SSR program promotes interest in reading.

7. Students of varying grade levels and gender react differently toward reading in an SSR program.

Limitations

The following are limitations of this study:

1. One school district was involved in this study.

2. Only teachers and students in grades four, five, and six were surveyed.

3. Data was gathered in Fall, 1989.

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Underlying Theory

SSR programs have undergone many changes in recent years. Programs have been dropped, and others have been altered to fit the needs of one particular school district. In the last decade, sustained silent reading has gained national attention as a component in school reading. Much time is spent teaching students how to read, but often few opportunities are afforded them to practice reading (Moore, Jones, and Miller, 1980). According to Manning-Dowd (1985), most school programs for SSR agree on the following guidelines: (a) no interruptions; (b) everyone reads, including the teacher; (c) students choose their own reading materials; (d) no required reports; (e) a wide variety of reading material should be available; and (f) the time period should be increased gradually. Many researchers agree that sustained silent reading can have a positive effect on reading comprehension and on student attitudes toward reading. Schaudt (1983) states that SSR provides a method to apply cognitive skills and encourage lifelong reading habits. Whether sustained silent reading is implemented in one classroom, one school, and/or throughout an entire district,

it aids in developing attitudes and habits conducive to a lifetime of reading for enjoyment and learning (Moore, Jones, and Miller, 1980).

Practice

Sustained silent reading provides an opportunity to practice reading skills, privately, without fear of mistakes. It allows students to react personally to ideas in print for extended periods of time. To learn a skill, students need practice in using that skill. Students involved in sustained silent reading may discover the pleasure of books, a sense of learning, of thinking, and the changes in behavior that come from mature reading, additional benefits which result from engagement in SSR.

Students need opportunities to practice reading. Because of curriculum demands as well as their busy lives outside of school, and frequently the lack of a quiet place to read at home, students feel there is too little time for reading and there are too many interruptions and distractions when they want to read (Moore, Jones, and Miller, 1980), thus SSR can offer students the practice needed to help them become competent readers. Each student should learn to read silently and sustain the act of reading books for reasonable periods of time (McCracken, 1971). To maximize the benefits of an SSR program, students must be given a quiet place to read and an adult role model, the teacher, to foster a desire

to read. This will promote achievement, attitudes, and interests in reading for students to enjoy reading as a holistic and recreational language activity (Sadowski, 1980).

Students also need to combine the subskills of reading in meaningful applications, for if students are taught isolated skills, they will develop a narrow perception of what the reading act involves. Proficient reading requires practice in application and transfer of isolated skills to the whole process (Manning-Dowd, 1985). Applying these isolated skills in a pleasurable, independent reading experience can be done with SSR (Gambrell, 1978), since it involves the total act of reading (Evans and Tower, 1975).

Bases

A sound basis must be established for beginning an SSR program, and certain steps should be taken to keep it going with high motivation and interest (Gambell, 1978). Increasing numbers of elementary and secondary teachers have implemented SSR as part of their reading programs. Appropriate guidelines for SSR have been proposed by McCracken (1971) and Ganz and Theofield (1974). In addition, sustained silent reading can be implemented in a school program at any level. A smooth transition from normal class activity to sustained silent reading is facilitated if students have identified what they will read prior to the start of the class period; the goal is as much to demonstrate

the utility of reading as it is to produce fluent readers.

Modeling

Research emphasizes that the teacher must participate as a reader in order for an SSR program to be successful. The importance of the modeling behavior by the teacher cannot be overstressed. Dixie Lee Spiegel (1981) believes that the most important factor in a recreational reading program is the teacher's belief in the value of the program, which can only be demonstrated by being a reading model. The teacher's overwhelming faith in the inherent value of reading is essential because "you can't 'sell' something you don't believe in yourself" (Perez, 1986). With modeling, SSR is a simple, yet effective technique for encouraging independent, silent reading, and it is worth the effort to get it started and keep it going in the classroom (Gambrell, 1978).

Values

The way a student feels about and values reading is also affected by a number of other factors. At the heart of the SSR concept is the fact that, despite teacher encouragement, students do not read outside of school. Many young people lack a quiet place to read or have no adult role model to foster a desire to read. SSR attempts to provide both (Moore, Jones, and Miller, 1980). Alexander and Filler (1976), through a review of research, found that focuses on the

amount of reading done by parents, the availability of reading materials in the home and the value placed on reading by family and peers were all indicators of an increased value of reading. The researcher also revealed that these factors are largely beyond the control of the classroom teacher.

Attitudes

Research conducted to determine the effects of SSR has produced mixed results, though most researchers seem to agree that SSR does have a positive effect on attitude toward reading. Manning-Dowd (1985), who presented a review of research on SSR, stated that it was reasonable to assume that a child who has developed positive attitudes toward reading will be stimulated to read more. Of the twelve studies cited, seven (Aranha, Bartelo, Burton, Cline and Kretke, Sadowski, Summers and McClelland, and Wilmot) (Francois, 1988) indicated that SSR had a positive effect on attitudes toward reading as measured on an attitude survey. Three studies (Collins, Langford, and Reed) (Francois, 1988) found no relationship between SSR and attitudes, and two studies did not address the topic of attitude (Evans and Towner and Kefford) (Francois, 1988). It is also revealing that Sauls (1971) found a positive relationship between the number of books read and a student's reading comprehension and attitudes toward reading.

The only research found pertaining to daily SSR implies

that there is no difference in the effects of daily SSR practice and daily reading skills practice upon students' attitudes and amounts of independent reading. Research suggests that significant results might be obtained in programs where students participate in SSR practice for an entire year (Einhorn, 1979).

Summary

In conclusion, it may be observed that while the literature on SSR is voluminous, it is not amenable to any conclusions related to the effects of sustained silent reading on attitudes toward reading. Furthermore, many studies directly investigating the SSR process can only suggest that this daily practice does not have detrimental effects on student reading attitudes. It is quite evident that long-term studies measuring the effects of SSR at all grade levels are needed, for the amount of time required for attitudes to change is yet an unknown factor.

CHAPTER III DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The target population for this study was comprised of all fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students who are currently enrolled in the elementary schools in the Pulaski, Wisconsin School District. It included the five following schools with grade 4, 5, and 6 enrollments listed as of September 15, 1989: Hillcrest 98; Lannoye 94; Sunnyside 150; Fairview 50; and Glenbrook 191. Two of the elementary schools (Hillcrest and Fairview) are organized on a kindergarten through six basis, while the remaining three elementary schools (Lannoye, Sunnyside, and Glenbrook) house students in kindergarten through the eighth grade.

The sample consisted of 583 or 100% of the intermediate grade students, and 26, or 100% of the teachers, within the five elementary schools in the Pulaski, Wisconsin School District. Classes are composed of rural and urban students who come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. The intermediate teaching staff and all students in grades four through six were surveyed. They were questioned about reading on a broad basis and about their attitudes toward SSR specifically.

The basis of this researcher's model questionnaire was predicated upon the investigations of Sadowski (1980) and

Tetroe (1980), and this researcher changed and adapted questions to examine the attitudes of intermediate grade students and their teachers toward SSR (see Appendix A & B).

The content of the questions on both surveys is similar, requesting information from individuals at the schools on attitude toward SSR and reading, personal reading habits, reading interests, the time of day SSR was in practice, and the continuation of SSR.

The teacher and student questionnaires used were two-page instruments. One was composed of 10, and the other 15 questions, and both surveys required structured and open-ended answers. So that any confusion with the questions could be explained, the student questionnaire was read aloud by the researcher in 26 classes: 9 fourth grades, 9.5 fifth grades, and 7.5 sixth grades. A total of 583 student and 26 teacher questionnaires were completed and compiled, which resulted in 100% participation in this survey. The responses to the attitude surveys were categorized and analyzed, each teacher/student/class was given a number/letter indicator, and findings were tabulated according to these designations. The written reports in this study did not identify individuals by name.

CHAPTER IV RESULTS

In order to assess teacher and student attitudes toward SSR at the five elementary schools, two questionnaires were administered. The researcher read the student survey to 583 students in grades four through six of which there was 100% participation (see Table 1). The staff at these elementary schools consisted of 26 teachers who participated in this study.

Table 1

Student sample from elementary schools

Grade	Male	Female	Total
4	103	100	203
5	100	100	200
6	98	82	180
Total	301	282	583

The Survey Results

Students were asked to select the answer, which would define the structured activity in which they were given a fixed period of time for silent reading of self-selected materials, and 61.6% of the intermediate grade students knew

that the acronym SSR meant sustained silent reading (see Table 2).

Table 2

Student/definition of SSR

Grade	4	5	6	Total	%
Know	122	133	104	359	61.6
Don't know	81	67	76	224	38.4
Total	203	200	180	583	100.0
Male					
Know	58	65	50	173	57.5
Don't know	45	35	48	128	42.5
Total	103	100	98	301	100.0
Female					
Know	64	68	54	186	66.0
Don't know	36	32	28	96	34.0
Total	100	100	82	282	100.0

Teachers were asked what the most important purpose of SSR is. This question was designed to find out whether the teachers knew the major purpose for the Pulaski SSR program. Three choices were given to select from, all of which are integral parts of the program, but only one choice (a) expressed the true purpose and meaning of the program (see Appendix B). Only 4 teachers or 15% selected the true purpose for the program, while 22 teachers or 85% did not select the most important purpose for the program.

The Study Hypotheses and Results

Hypothesis One: Self-selection of materials by students will enhance enjoyment of reading.

The type of material actually read during SSR was questioned in order to determine what material teachers preferred students read, and what the students felt they were allowed to read (see Tables 3 & 4).

Table 3

Students allowed to select material for fun

Grade	4	5	6
Yes	56%	56%	57%
No	44%	44%	43%

Table 4

Student's reading preferences

Grade	4	5	6
Books	76%	54%	48%
Magazines	22%	40%	34%
Newspapers	2%	6%	18%

* Percentages based on student first choices

Even though the majority of students felt they were allowed to select whatever materials they wanted to read for

fun, their first preference was books. On the other hand, there still comes to mind the question of teacher preference as to what they will permit the students to actually read during SSR.

Teachers were asked about the types of materials they allowed their students to read and to rate the order of their preference. The following is what the teachers perceive, in order of importance, the materials that they allow their students to select. Twenty teachers or 77%, ranked books #1, magazines #2, and newspapers #3. Five teachers or 19%, ranked books #1, newspapers #2, and magazines #3. Only one teacher or 4%, allowed only books from the Accelerated Reader Computer Program to be selected and read during SSR. Books were the #1 priority for selection of materials by the teacher because eighteen teachers or 69% felt it helps emphasize recreational reading, and eight teachers or 31%, ranked the Accelerated Reader Computer Program as the reason for emphasis on books.

Hypothesis Two: There is a relationship between time of day that SSR is done and student behavior.

In fourth grade, five classes had SSR in the morning (AM) before recess (AMBR), and four classes had SSR in the afternoon (PM) after recess (PMAR). All these teachers agreed SSR had a calming affect on the students and one teacher stated it had no effect.

Fifth grade has five classes which had SSR in the afternoon (PM) before recess (PMBR), and four and one half classes had SSR in the afternoon (PM) after recess (PMAR). These nine and one half teachers all agreed it had a calming affect on the students.

Finally, six classes in the sixth grade had SSR in the afternoon (PM) after recess (PMAR), and one and one half classes had SSR in the afternoon (PM) before recess (PMBR). These seven and one half teachers also agreed it had a calming affect on the students.

Hypothesis Three: There is a relationship between time of day when students want to have SSR and their attitudes toward SSR.

Tables 5 - 10 show results for questions dealing with time of day for SSR and attitude toward SSR.

Table 5

Fourth grade classes who have SSR mornings before recess

	Times students prefer SSR			
	AMBR	AMAR	PMBR	PMAR
	29%	18%	14%	39%
	Attitudes of students in numbers			
Boring	3	4	3	7
Fun	28	16	12	35

Table 6

Fourth grade classes who have SSR afternoons after recess

	Times students prefer SSR			
	AMBR	AMAR	PMBR	PMAR
	1%	10%	43%	46%
	Attitudes of students in numbers			
Boring	0	2	6	5
Fun	1	8	35	38

Table 7

Fifth grade classes who have SSR afternoons before recess

	Times students prefer SSR			
	AMBR	AMAR	PMBR	PMAR
	10.5%	10.5%	19%	60%
	Attitudes of students in numbers			
Boring	3	0	3	14
Fun	8	11	17	48

Table 8

Fifth grade classes who have SSR afternoons after recess

	Times students prefer SSR			
	AMBR	AMAR	PMBR	PMAR
	15%	16%	13%	56%
	Attitudes of students in numbers			
Boring	3	3	4	8
Fun	11	12	9	46

Table 9

Sixth grade classes who have SSR afternoons before recess

	Times students prefer SSR			
	AMBR	AMAR	PMBR	PMAR
	27%	9%	27%	37%
	Attitudes of students in numbers			
Boring	2	0	0	2
Fun	7	3	9	10

Table 10

Sixth grade classes who have SSR afternoons after recess

	Times students prefer SSR			
	AMBR	AMAR	PMBR	PMAR
	29%	6%	15%	50%
	Attitudes of students in numbers			
Boring	18	4	9	18
Fun	25	6	13	54

When all tables are examined, no matter what grade level is assessed when the students prefer to have SSR, as opposed to when they currently have SSR, the majority of the students find it to be fun.

Hypothesis Four: The SSR program on a daily basis is more effective than on a non daily basis.

Tables 11 - 13 give questionnaire results for questions dealing with frequency of SSR and perceptions of SSR effectiveness.

Table 11

	SSR Frequency		
Grades	4	5	6
Daily	89%	68%	87%
Non daily	11%	32%	13%

Table 12

Effectiveness of SSR (Males)

		Daily			Non-Daily		
Read	Grades	4	5	6	4	5	6
Less		4%	3%	-	-	3%	12%
Same		33%	36%	25%	33%	36%	40%
More		63%	61%	75%	67%	61%	48%

Table 13

Effectivenesss of SSR (Females)

		Daily			Non-Daily		
Read	Grades	4	5	6	4	5	6
Less		-	-	9%	-	-	-
Same		34%	42%	36%	37%	35%	48%
More		66%	48%	55%	63%	65%	52%

When the results are looked at on the daily to non daily basis by grade level and reading habits, they are about the same for effectiveness.

Hypothesis Five: Teacher role modeling affects SSR.

In responding to the questionnaire, teachers of grades four through six unanimously agreed that recreational reading

is valuable. Further, questions asked whether or not teachers practice what they preach during SSR, if they read themselves or not (see Table 14).

Table 14

What teachers do during SSR

Grade	4	5	6
Read	56%	68%	73%
Don't read	44%	32%	27%
Materials read during SSR			
Recreational	34%	42%	46%
Professional	22%	26%	27%
Classroom	44%	32%	27%

Results (Table 14) show that the teachers do read during SSR and that they read a variety of materials.

Teachers were asked about students' interest in reading as the result of SSR (see Table 15). It was noted that SSR and presumably teacher modeling made a difference.

Table 15

Teacher opinion on student interest in reading

Grade	4	5	6
No interest	0%	0%	0%
Some interest	56%	44%	44%
More interest	44%	56%	56%

Additionally, when students were asked about reading during free time most endorsed it (see Table 16).

Table 16

Student's outside reading habits

Grade	4	5	6
Never	3.5%	8.5%	19.0%
Sometimes	82.0%	81.5%	74.0%
Always	14.5%	10.0%	7.0%

The teachers felt that there is increased interest in reading by the students, but this may be due to the enthusiasm shown during SSR periods. This interest was less outside the SSR period as pointed out by the results in Table 16 showing there was no noticeable improvement in reading habits by the students. It was noted that the higher the grade level, the lower the percentage of reading habits in

all categories.

Student comments in the intermediate grades included the following reasons for not reading: (1) There is not enough time for reading, and (2) There are too many interruptions--classwork, home/farm chores, sports, and religious events which demand part of a student's day. As a result of the activities students are engaged in, adult and peer interaction increase with many behaviors being tried in various situations, and thus, there is an increased demand made on student's time.

Students stated they could read more, if they were alone, or got away from others, and people would stop bothering them (Heathington, 1979).

Hypothesis Six: An SSR program promotes interest in reading.

One of the benefits that should be gained from an SSR program is to promote additional interest in reading by students (see Table 17).

Table 17

Reading Interest

	Male			Female		
Grade	Less	Same	More	Less	Same	More
4	1.5%	33.5%	65.0%	-	35.0%	65.0%
5	2.0%	33.0%	65.0%	-	35.0%	65.0%
6	8.0%	28.0%	64.0%	6.0%	36.0%	58.0%

There is an interest in reading reported by the majority of the students. The question is whether or not the interest is due to the implementation of an SSR program or because the students like to read. If the students like to read during their free-time and the program is a success, a greater percentage of students would read under the Always category in Table 16. Therefore it may be that the increased interest is only at school during SSR periods.

Hypothesis Seven: Students of varying grade levels and gender react differently toward reading in an SSR program.

Students attitude toward SSR is shown in Table 18.

Table 18

Student Attitude - General

Grades	4	5	6
Boring	31 (15%)	36 (18%)	52 (29%)
Fun	172 (85%)	164 (82%)	128 (71%)
Male			
Boring	24 (23%)	28 (28%)	39 (40%)
Fun	79 (77%)	72 (72%)	59 (60%)
Female			
Boring	7 (7 %)	8 (8 %)	13 (16%)
Fun	93 (93%)	92 (92%)	69 (84%)

This study did verify what others have stated in the past, namely, that attitudes toward SSR progressively become less positive in both grade and gender.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions were drawn from the study results of student and teacher attitudes toward SSR, based on the study hypotheses.

Hypothesis One: Self-selection of materials by students will enhance enjoyment of reading.

Books were rated as the number one selection for reading by students. The majority of teachers emphasized books during SSR. This is indicated by the fact that only a slight majority of students in all grades as opposed to an overwhelming majority felt they were allowed to select materials they wanted to read.

There seems to be a misunderstanding on the part of the faculty that books are the only material SSR emphasizes. Research suggests that self-selection of any material the students wish to read improves enjoyment of reading (Duffy, 1976). Self-selection of materials by students is limited in the Pulaski SSR program.

Hypothesis Two: There is a relationship between time of day that SSR is done and student behavior.

The only behavioral change resulting from SSR was that it had a calming affect on the students. The time of day

SSR was held had no bearing on this behavior.

Hypothesis Three: There is a relationship between time of day when students want to have SSR and their attitudes toward SSR.

No relationship was noted between students desire to have SSR and their present attitudes toward SSR. This is true because no matter when they have SSR, it is deemed as an enjoyable activity by an average of 80% of the students.

Hypothesis Four: The SSR program on a daily basis is more effective than on a non-daily basis.

Questionnaire results of daily and non-daily student groups show that both have relatively the same proportionate values of effectiveness for all grade levels.

Hypothesis Five: Teacher role modeling affects SSR.

The majority of the faculty in the study read during SSR. However, many read professional or classroom materials thus possibly portraying the wrong type of role model for students to follow in that they did not model recreational reading.

It may be that teachers interpret SSR as being just a set time each day when every student and teacher reads silently for a substantial period of time without interruption. SSR is possibly seen as nothing more than a drill or practice of reading. Research has shown that 100% teacher commitment (including proper modeling) is the only

way an SSR program can have any effectiveness (Risser, 1979).

It should be noted that the teacher as a role model may be the only adult some students observe using reading as a useful and enjoyable skill. Since teachers' enthusiasm or lack of interest in reading is easily communicated to students, proper motivation of teachers is a significant part of a design for implementing SSR in a school (Aranha, 1985).

Hypothesis Six: An SSR program promotes interest in reading.

The student's interest is being aroused, but it seems to be only during the SSR period that the motivation is taking place.

Hypothesis Seven: Students of varying grade levels and gender react differently toward reading in an SSR program.

The higher the grade level, the less enthusiasm students have for the SSR program, which substantiates the findings of Mikulecky and Wolf (1977), who point out that there is a progressive diminishing of interest in reading through the elementary grades.

It may be possible that the same situation could also apply to gender. Gender has sometimes been found to be related to attitudes toward reading, with females showing more positive attitudes in some studies, while other studies show males benefited more from SSR than did females. In this study, it was shown that there is a progressive

diminishing of interest in grade level as well as gender.

This study verified what others have stated in the past, namely, that attitudes toward SSR progressively become less positive in both grade and gender. The key factor is motivation and the continued interest in SSR can only be accomplished through devising innovative programs to stimulate the motivation in both teachers and students.

Recommendations

A meeting should be set up between faculty and the district reading specialist to discuss the following aspects of SSR programs pertaining to the school district emphasizing the recommended activities that follow:

1. Reorientation as to the main purpose of SSR
2. Proper role modeling
3. Plan and establish a motivational program for the faculty
4. Plan and establish a motivational program for the students

With the adoption of an SSR program in the Pulaski School District, teachers can help the program continue to be successful through proper modeling. Classroom libraries can be developed as inviting corners for students to choose materials, which have been gathered through cooperative efforts of students, teachers, and librarians. Additional activities which include poetry, creative dramatics, puppetry

and other types of oral reading involving students as planners, performers and critics can strengthen an SSR program.

The SSR program in the Pulaski School District has shown positive effects, as noted in this study. The program must be reviewed regularly so as to stay with the changing times and identify possible problem areas before they become unmanageable. Therefore a commitment to the maintenance of the program is necessary. When managed properly SSR programs are of conclusive value and have become a worthwhile addition to the collection of strategies in teaching reading.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Student Survey

Please answer the following questions.

1. I am a a) boy b) girl

2. I am in grade a) 4 b) 5 c) 6

3. What is SSR?

   a) self silent reading
   b) sustained silent reading
   c) sit down silent reading

4. What do you do during SSR periods?

   a) I do not read
   b) I read some of the time
   c) I read all of the time

5. When would you like to have SSR?

   a) morning
   b) afternoon

6. Would you like to have SSR

   a) mornings before recess
   b) mornings after recess
   c) afternoons before recess
   d) afternoons after recess

7. Does your teacher read during SSR?

   a) yes
   b) no

8. Are you allowed to read anything you want for fun during SSR?

   a) yes
   b) no

9. If you could read what you wanted during SSR, what would you select? (Number 1, 2, 3)

____books
____magazines
____newspapers

10. Do you have SSR every day?

a) yes
b) no

11. Because of SSR I read

a) less
b) more
c) the same

12. How do you feel about SSR?

a) SSR is boring
b) SSR is fun

13. When you have free time at school or home do you read

a) never
b) sometimes
c) always

14. I want SSR to continue because

a) I get to choose what I like to read
b) The teacher helps me choose something to read
c) I get some time at school to read by myself
d) I do not want SSR to continue

15. Additional comments _____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix B

Teacher Survey

Please answer the following questions.

1. The most important purpose of SSR is to (select one)

   a) allow students to select whatever type of materials they want to read
   b) get students to expand their reading interests
   c) provide opportunities for students to practice reading in school

2. What time of day do you have SSR?

   a) morning
   b) afternoon

3. If you have SSR before or after recess does it (select one)

   a) have no effect on the students
   b) has a calming effect on the students
   c) stimulates the students' interest

4. What do you do during SSR?

   a) I read
   b) I do not read

5. During SSR what do you read?

   a) recreational reading of books or magazines
   b) professional materials
   c) classroom material

6. Would you prefer to have SSR

   a) daily
   b) 2 - 3 times per week
   c) once a week

7. What do you allow your students to read during SSR? (Rate 1, 2, 3)

	If books, rate 1, 2, 3
____books	____accelerated reader
____magazines	____reports
____newspapers	____recreational reading

8. Do you feel SSR increases the interest in reading?

a) no more interest
b) some interest
c) a lot more interest

9. Do you feel recreational reading is valuable?

a) yes
b) no

10. Do you feel our current SSR program is effective?

a) yes
b) no
Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

_____

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